

Smith-Lever 2010 Progress Report

Title: Online learning modules to improve access to DEC category recertification credits for fruit and vegetable farmers

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1. Progress Summary (milestones, activities, lessons learned, etc)*

The PMEP Distance Learning web site, which was developed to manage user access to the online modules, has been up and running since mid-June. Many lessons were learned in the process of getting this site going. It is a secure merchant site, compliant with University security requirements, allowing users to pay using a credit card. The Moodle software used to develop the modules has features that allow us to meet Department of Environmental Conservation requirements for identifying users and monitoring time spent interacting with the modules. Mailing official certificates to users and monthly reporting to DEC are being handled by Ron Gardner and PMEP staff. User fees will help support these activities and also support ongoing web server hosting.

There are eight core credit modules and four category credit modules currently available to users, with five more category modules under development. Since June, twenty-seven people have successfully received recertification credits through the site. One user used the site to meet part of the requirements for their initial certification. Few problems have been encountered, and the user feedback we have received has been positive: "Using the on line courses, I was able to obtain my private pesticides applicator recertification. A good program and thanks for your help."

2. Expected and Observed Impact/Outcome (economic, environmental, and social)*

Farmers and other Department of Environmental Conservation certified pesticide applicators have improved access to recertification credits without the need for travel and time off the farm. Those in areas without commodity-specific Extension programming have improved access to educational information that will enhance their agricultural enterprise, as well as providing recertification credits. County extension programs have an additional service they are able to offer farmers in their county, by providing online access to those who do not have computers or high-speed internet access. Extension faculty and field staff have an additional avenue for providing educational programs to farmers. Now that the payment and user identification infrastructure has been developed, recertification courses for hard-to-obtain credits like Interior Plant Maintenance, Agricultural and Companion Animal can be developed and made available to users.

3. Publications (magazines, journals, etc)

Online modules:

Insect Biocontrol

Swede Midge Identification, Biology, and Management

Sweet Corn IPM

Ecological Weed Management
Toxicity of Pesticides
Ecology and Environmental Considerations
Safety Precautions with Pesticides
Personal Protection for the Applicator and Worker
Weatherwise Application
Proper Pesticide Disposal
Pesticide Storage
Protecting Water from Pesticide Pollution

Extension newsletter article:
Distributed to ag agents, CCE news
Seaman, Abby, and Ron Gardner, 2010. DEC Recertification Credits Now Available Online!

5. Communications (videos, web sites, etc)
PMEP Distance Learning Center: <http://pmepcourses.cce.cornell.edu/>

6. Presentations (in-services, workshops, etc)

Presentation at the 2009 Ag and Food systems in-service “Electronic Communication Tools” session

Presentation at 2010 pesticide applicator’s update: Using MOODLE to present pesticide applicator training courses and the Pesticide Management Education Program's (PMEP) Distance Learning Center